Happy Father's Day to ALL LA-ACE Fathers

General Meeting

Tuesday June 2nd, 7:00 pm

Granada Hills High School
(in Auditorium)
10535 Zelzah Ave. Granada Hills

Between Devonshire Street and Chatsworth
Street on the West side of Zelzah Avenue

ST Special Interest Group

Tuesday June 16th, 7:00 pm
Mercury Savings and Loan
7040 Sepulveda Blvd. Van Nuys
South of Sherman Way Blvd.

SEE MAP ON THE BACK!!!

Future Meetings:

General	ST Sig
July 7th	July 21st
Aug 4th	Aug 18th
Sept 8th	Sept 22nd

JUNE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

• Disk Publications, Inc. will be at our June General Meeting to demonstrate The New Aladdin Collection. Be there promptly at 7:00 so we can begin our meeting on time. Remember, our DOOR PRIZE DRAWING will be at the beginning of the meeting, so don't be late!!!!

LA-ACE Meeting Minutes May 1987 By Douglas Kelley

Despite a somewhat low turnout this month, if you didn't show you missed a very good meeting!

Jon Dekeles opened the meeting a few minutes after 7 PM. There was an immediate suggestion from the floor to have the door prizes given away at the BEGINNING of the meeting, instead of at the end, so that only those people who came on time could win. Sounds like a good idea to me, so you might want to make a greater effort to be on time!

The floor was then opened for the question and answer period. Jon gave a quick summary of the Constitution and Bylaws, and a short history of its formation was given by Jon and Bill.

If you have an Okimate 20 Color printer, be aware that it does NOT have an ST interface. All ST programs that support Okimate assume you have the IBM interface. Thanks to Lee Brilliant for that tip.

A roundtable discussion of Atari's seeming lack of support of their computers (not being sold in stores, bad sales policies, etc) began. Bill said that only European dealers were getting support, and that even the mail-order companies here are not.

Suggestion by a number of members to do some demos of the BASIC language (both ST and 8-bit) and basic computer operations. Since it sounds like a good idea to us, Jon and I will set up something about it next month.

Newsletter prizes were awarded: $15 to Jim Garvey, and $10 to Ray Maynard and Warren Farina. This was Jim Garvey's first article! See how easy it is to make some quick cash?

The Constitution was then voted on and approved unanimously and with no abstentions, to a round of applause.

Ralf Maltzen from Germany (see how well known we are?) showed off several graphics demos written by him and other Germans. The Atari line of computers are very hot sellers there, so we should be seeing a lot more from overseas. Ralf ran his demos through the break.

After our break, Dr. Lee Brilliant - who is also the author of Analog's Bits and Pieces column - showed how you can use a 400 or 800 as a printer buffer for another Atari computer. The computer that acts as a buffer requires three joystick ports, so that's why only a 400 or 800 can be the buffer. You can use any Atari as the source though.

The door prizes were awarded and the meeting was adjourned. Door prizes donated were a printer stand from Personal Computers Etc., Forbidden Quest and Math Encounter donated by Logical Choice, Atari Proofreader from Lotsa Bytes, and several posters from New Riders Publishing.

Digital Depot gave away free 1987 - 1988 calendars to all who attended.

"ARC, ARC, ARC, ARC"
by Dan Rhea

¿ing a SYSOP on CompuServe Atari16, you would imagine the most common question the users ask would be "How do I download?" Well, it's probably the second most asked question... The first, I hope to deal with in this article, is simply "How come my .ARC files don't work?"! Nothing in life comes easy, so I'm going to run you through ARK, beginning with the hard way, followed by the detailed way, and then, if you have the patience to stay with me, the easy way (i.e. lazy).

First off, let's define an ARC file -- It is a collection of individual files, in alphabetical order, and in most cases, compressed in some way or the other, and collected into one file that has the extender ".ARC" on it. Additionally, each file has a CRC attached to it (so we can confirm its integrity), noting what type of compression was used on it, its new and old sizes, and a date and time stamp. The advantages gained are approximately 55% size reduction for text files, 30% reduction for most programs, and as much as 55% reduction for pictures (better than TINY, usually).

Now, on to that most common problem -- Our user, Suede Onym, who has been downloading files for years for his 8-bit machine, has finally made the obvious choice and stepped up to an Atari ST. After wandering around the ı Libraries for a bit, he spots several programs he ːs. He chooses, for example, MONOP.ARC, ∟.ıUMAC.ARC (and LOOKSE.ARC? Nah!). Now down come the files, much larger than the old 8-bit ones, he will probably note. The download is finished, and he dutifully double clicks on MONOP.ARC, and is faced with the choice [List] [Print] [Cancel] (A particularly irritating one, since it's not in the manual). After filling the screen with trash, and watching his printer do things he never thought it capable of, he will normally rename the file (i.e., MONOP.ARC to MONOP.PRG).

With a happy smile on his face and the confidence that he has finally wrestled this beast to the ground, he double-clicks on MONOP.PRG, only to get the dreaded "TOS ERROR #35"! For those of you not in the know, TOS ERROR #35 is the ST equivalent of "Huh?" or "I have no bloody idea what to do with this". Suede is, by now, quite miffed. He has downloaded a "large" file that he can't do anything with. Fortunately he does the obvious (at least I hope this is what most of them do!), he calls back, and leaves us a message "I downloaded MONOP.ARC and ..."

What Suede is missing, of course, are probably the first two files anyone on CompuServe, a BBS, or any other service should download. The files are ARC.TTP and ARC.DOC (both in DL3 of Atari16 by the way). At this point, a thorough reading of ARC.DOC is in order, t'˜gh rarely done. So let's skip all the details for now, ·et Suede get on to playing MONOPOLY.

First off, you will note that this is one of those dreaded ".TTP" programs. Well, read last month's article on them, or pick it up out of DL8 as TTPART.DOC on Atari16. All we really need to do at this point is "extract" all the files from MONOP.ARC. Here are some examples of how to do just that -- On the OPEN APPLICATION line type:

    xh MONOP.ARC *.*

This translates into roughly this: the "x" means extract all files. The "h" means hold off going directly back to the Desktop when we finish, so you can see any errors (also if used by itself, it will give you a quick HELP screen). The MONOP.ARC tells us where to get the files (Note: the .ARC extender is optional here, but I suggest you use it anyway). Finally, the "*.*" tells us where to put the extracted files (this is also an optional default, but one I again suggest you use). Hopefully, Suede has plenty of disk space on the disk that MONOP.ARC is on, since that is where all the extracted files have been told to go, but just to make his life even more difficult, we will assume that he doesn't. No problem...TTP to the rescue. Suede can now type the following:

    xh A:\MONOP.ARC B:*.*

Now all the extracted files will come from the A: drive and go to the B: drive. We've been nasty enough to poor Suede so far, so we'll let him have a dual drive system and save him all those disk swaps! Also of interest to some of you, it is possible to extract to and from a Ram-Disk as well, and save lots of time, if you have the space for it!

Ok, we have now made Suede Onym an expert in ARC file extraction, and it's now time to see what this incredibly powerful program is really capable of! Back to CompuServe, to pick up the file ARC.ARC, in DL3 of Atari16. This gives you two additional ARC utilities (ARCM.TTP - Archive Merge and ARCX.TTP - Archive Extract), and a new ARC.DOC file. This is the one with the real meat in it.

The following is a list and a brief description of what ARC.TTP is capable of:

A : Add files to archive, ignoring time and date information. M : Move files to archive, ignoring time and date information, and delete the file from its previous location. U : Update files in archive, keeping the "newest" file and adding any file that does not already exist. F : Freshen files in archive, keeping the "newest" files, but not adding any that did not already exist. D : Delete files from archive(forever), and recombine the files to remove unwanted data. X or E : Extract files from the archive. R : Run a file (with arguments), from the archive (TTP, TOS, or PRG and if named the same, the .RSC file is used as well). P : Copy a file from archive to standard output (i.e. print a file from archive). L : List the names of the files in an archive. V : List the names of the files in an archive in a verbose format that includes name, compression method, CRC, new and old sizes, the percentage saved and the date and time stamp. T : Tests the archive file integrity to make sure it contains no bad files. C : Convert an entry to a new packing method. This is used if a newer compression scheme comes along and you suspect you could obtain a better compression percentage. B : Retain a

backup of the archive you are working on, that is unaltered and has the extension .BAC, not .ARC.   S : Suppress compression. This keeps the file in exactly the same form it was supplied in.   W : Suppress warning messages (not usually a good idea).   N : Suppress notes and comments generated (also not usually a good idea).   H : Hold screen before returning to Desktop, and if supplied alone, produces a short "HELP" list of valid commands.   G : When used as the last option supplied, it can be followed by a key that will encrypt or decrypt the data in the archive (i.e. xhg BOOT MONOP.ARC *.*, where BOOT is the key). And you thought that all it did was extract files!

Now that I have buried you under all that information, let me show you a few examples of how to use it (or abuse, as the case may be), and we will move on to making ARC simple again.

ah a:\swill.arc c:\mydocs*.* This will create a file on the root directory of A: called "swill.arc", and fill it with all the files in the folder "mydocs" from the C: drive (or Ram-Disk).

mhgARGH b:\source.arc a:\cprogs*.c This will create a file on the B: drive root directory called "source.arc", that contains all the files with the extension .c, in the folder on the A: drive, and encrypted using the key ARGH. So much for the silly examples, on to more important things, like how to make this stuff simple, so I don't need to read the documentation every time I need a file!

Once again, it's back to Compu-Serve for another .ARC file, and this one is called ARCSHE.ARC.

ARCSHE.ARC (once you extract the files), gives you ARCSHELL.PRG and ARCSHELL.RSC. These were written in MODULA2 by Jerry K. LaPeer, and provide you with a very clean GEM interface to all those options. It also provides file selector boxes to help you select what to archive or extract, and where to get or put the files. Once I ran across this little gem, I typed my last TTP OPEN APPLICATION command line for ARC.TTP (note, you still need ARC.TTP since Jerry's program is simply a shell).

Now if you're still interested, here is a little more technical information on ARC files, as well as some history about the program:

All the files are stored in alphabetical order, and have a header in the following format:

Filename: 13 bytes null (0) terminated (char)   Size: 4 bytes (long int)   Date: 2 bytes (int) (IBM/Intel format   Time: 2 bytes (int) (IBM/Intel format)   CRC : 2 bytes (int)   Length : 4 bytes (long int) The ARC file is fully compatible with ARC files used by IBM and Amiga (and in some cases CP/M). That, of course means data compatible, not program compatible. An example would be for me to download a bunch of IBM files, archive them on my ST, and then send them to a friend with an IBM. He will be able to extract and run the files, as if they came directly from an IBM system ARC program.

The following are the compression methods used by ARC.TTP:

1 : No conversion, listed in verbose as "--", no longer used.   2 : No conversion, listed in verbose as "--", super-ceded 1 in that the original file length is retained.   3 : Repeated character compression, listed in verbose as "Packed". In very simplified terms, "AAAAA" is treated as "A5" although the "5" is stored as a binary number, not an ASCII 5. 4 : Huffman Encoding, listed in verbose as "Squeezed". The method all those SQUEEZE programs used. Converts characters into smaller bit strings depending on frequency count of appearance in file.   5, 6, and 7 : Lempel-Zev Compression, listed as "crunched" in a verbose listing.   8 : Dynamic Lempel-Zev Compression, listed as "Crunched" in a verbose listing.

Any other types (perhaps the next generation), would be listed as "Unknown!" in a verbose listing. Now that you are again burdened with more information than you care to know about, it's time to give credit where credit is due:

ARC, was developed originally for the CP/M and MS-DOS industry, based on the work of Huffman, Kunth, Knott, Welch and several other scientists. The Atari ST version is based on the IBM version, originally done by Thom Henderson. The Atari ST version was created by Harvy Johnson (see the doc file in ARC.ARC for Harvy's address and such). The majority of the technical information contained in this article came directly from Harvy's documentation in the file ARC.ARC. When I mention credit where credit is due, if you download just one file that has been processed with ARC.TTP then Mr. Henderson has saved you 30 to 50 percent of what it would otherwise have cost you to download the same file(s), not processed by ARC.TTP!

TANSTAAFL.

DATATRIEVE
by Philip Pennie

...ıst recently made what turned out to be a very wise purchase. Having wanted a filing system for research notes for some time, I finally invested in Datatrieve by Abacus Software.

My only experience with databases previous to this was on the Apple, and I must say, working with the St and Datatrieve is a far cry from that. For one thing, Datatrieve's files can be quite large - up to 64k characters. For me that means I am able to set up files that will store longish quotations. Datatrieve saves these files on the disk dynamically, which I guess means that it does not save the empty spaces you do not use. The long and short of it is I can save the equivalent of over 250 3x5 note cards filled with information, publisher, author, quotes, page number, etc. on a single 350k disk. And the best thing is that Datatrieve is compatible with a ram disk (which it comes with) so that searching and file manipulation takes seconds.

Besides all this, Datatrieve has lots of bells and whistles: You can create your own masks on the screen so you actually enter the data in a nicely designed form, with 6 different fonts. More importantly, you can set up printer forms that allow you to print out reports in almost any form, including form letters, multicolumned reports, 3x5 note cards, roledex cards, and so on.

All of this involves some very sophisticated logic. Thus, ...her plus is that Datatrieve is entirely Gem and mouse ...en - to set up forms you just draw boxes (the commands are echoed on the keyboard). To flip through the files you simply click the mouse on the appropriate token. And it is all clearly and intuitively organized so that a novice like myself setup a filing system in the first night I used it.

But the best thing about Datatrieve - the reason why I got it - is the price. It list for $49, which means you can get it in mailorder place (here in Software Discounters) for about $33. So if you are in the market for an inexpensive yet powerful database/filing system, check out Datatrieve!

Watch your Language
Warren Farina LA-ACE

Originally published in Info World on Oct. 4, 1982 and has been widely reprinted since then.

BASIC, FORTRAN, COBOL... These programming languages are well known and more or less well-loved throughout the computer industry. However, there are numerous other languages which are less well known, yet still have ardent devotees. In fact, these little-known languages generally have the most fanatic admirers. For those ... wish to know more about these obscure languages, and why they are obscure, I present the following catalog:

SIMPLE... is an acronym for "Sheer Idiot's Monopurpose Programming Linguistic Environment." This language, developed at Hanover's College for Technical Misfits, was designed to make it impossible to write code with any errors in it. The commands of this language are therefore confined to BEGIN, END and STOP. Furthermore, no matter how the commands are arranged, it is impossible to receive a syntax error.

Programs written in SIMPLE do nothing useful. Thus, they achieve results similar to programs written in other languages without the tedious frustrating process of testing and debugging.

SLOBOL... is best known for its tremendously slow compiler. While many compilers allow you to take a coffee break while they compile, SLOBOL allows you to travel to Bolivia to pick up the coffee. Forty-three programmers are known to have died of boredom while sitting at their console and waiting for a SLOBOL program to be compiled. Weary SLOBOL programmers often turn to a related (but infinitely faster) language, COCAINE.

VALGOL... was developed in Southern California's San Fernando Valley in hope of educating Valley girls in programming.

VALGOL commands include REALLY, LIKE, WELL, TUBULAR, GROSS ME OUT and Y'KNOW. Variables are assigned with the =LIKE and =TOTALLY operators. Other operators include the "Californian Booleans" FERSURE and NOWAY. Repetitions of code are handled in FOR-SURE loops. Here is a sample VALGOL program:

```
14  LIKE, Y'KNOW (I MEAN) START
%%  IF
PI  A =LIKE BITCHEN AND
OI  B =LIKE TUBULAR AND
 9  C =LIKE GRODY**MAX
4K  (FERSURE)**2
18  THEN
4I  FOR I =LIKE 1 TO OH MAYBE 100
86  DO WAH + (DITTY**2)
 9  BARF(I) =TOTALLY GROSS(OUT)
17  SURE
IF  LIKE BAG THIS PROGRAM
 ?  REALLY
$$  LIKE TOTALLY (Y'KNOW)
```

VALGOL is somewhat declaimed by its users for its unfriendly error messages. For example, when the user mkes a syntax error, it replies with the message "GAG ME WITH A SPOON."
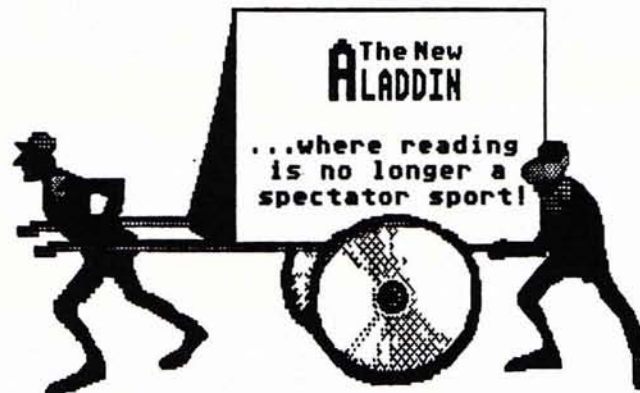
LAIDBACK... was developed at the (now defunct) Marin County Center for T'ai Chi, Mellowness and Computer Programming.

This center was ideal for programmers who liked to soak in hot tubs while they worked. However, and unfortunately, few programmers could survive there long, since they outlawed Coca Cola and pizza in favor of bean curd and Perrier.

Many mourn the demise of LAIDBACK because of its reputation as a gentle and non-threatening language. For example, LAIDBACK responded to user syntax with the message, "SORRY MAN, I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT."

C- ... was named for the grade its creator received when he submitted it to his professor in Graduate-Programming Class. C- is best described as a low-level programming language. In fact, the language generally requires more C-statements than machine code statements to execute a given task. In this respect, it is very similar to COBOL.

FIFTH... is a precision mathematical language in which data types refer to quantities. The data types range from CC, OUNCE, SHOT and JIGGER to FIFTH (hence the name of the language,) LITER, MAGNUM, and GROTTO. Commands refer to ingredients such as CHABLIS, CHAR-DONNAY, CABERNET, GIN, VERMOUTH, VODKA, SCOTCH and WHATEVERSAROUND.

There are many versions of FIFTH, each of which reflects the sophistication and financial status of its users. Commands in the ELITE dialect include VSOP and LAFIATTE, while commands in the GUTTER dialect include HOOTCH and RIPPLE. The latter dialect is a favorite of frustrated FORTH programmers.

LITHP... ith unremarkable, thave for the abthence of the letter ETH in itth character thet, yet it ith thaid to be utheful in proceththing lithtth. Now ithn't that thpecial?

Most Outrageous Rumor Contest

t Paul ATARI Computer Enthusiasts
Reprinted from SPACE Newsletter
With Permission

1. ATARI has just discovered by accident that the old 2 transistor radio transistors do everything that the blitter chip was supposed to do. So, upgrades will be available for one dollar from ATARI dealers.

2. A guy in Colorado just found out that if you tape a twoinch square of aluminum foil to the bottom of a 520 or 1040ST on the left front side, that the capacity of the internal memory is a little less than doubled.

3. ATARI's market research folks just reported to the firm that the best advertising for their products was through the success of the local Special Interest Groups, and therefore, a decision has been made to give MAST, SPACE and all other U.S. groups a one-time gift of $10,000 to help them plan bigger and better activities and to get more local visibility.

4. Rumor has it that the 1200 baud modem from ATARI ˙˙ been delayed again; however, some good news - the 0 baud modem is now available.

5. Sunnyvale, California:

ATARI Corporation announced today their bid had been selected by the U.S. Defense Dept. to provide 10,000 state-of-the-art battle engagement simulator systems for all branches of the armed services. Each $750,000 modular package will be portable and can be used for tactical and strategic real-time simulations for any level of engagement from individual unit to national mobilization.

As ATARI stock rose sharply some Wall Street insiders rumoured that ATARI was moving into a factory recently purchased from IBM where they would mass produce military ruggidized versions of their Model 400 laptop mainframe and MIL SPEC ROM software packages code-named STAR RAIDERS, MISSILE COMMAND and EASTERN FRONT The Soviet military journal Isvestia sharply attacked the action as destabilizing East-West tensions. National Security Council experts say the ATARI development of 6th generation battle simulation hardware and software places Soviet forces at a distinct readiness disadvantage through at least 1995 or until the Russian government finds a reliable source of quarters.

6. Coleco Buys Apple

Coleco, the makers of the Cabbage Patch Dolls, purchased Apple Computer today. Due to a bug in Microsoft Excel, Apple executives were surprised to learn they sold controlling interest in Apple Computer to Coleco. Microsoft blames the bug on a 'feature' within the MacIntosh. Coleco, saying that now they are a major player in the computer industry, vows to take on IBM with a new machine. This computer has been dubbed the Adam PCjr Laptop. Technical specifications have not been released yet, but the Adam PCjr will include The Bundle of Joy Software Series. Featured programs in this series are Cabbage Calc, Cabbage Speech, Cabbage Write, Cabbage Spell, and Cabbage Slaw. IBM, in a rare retaliatory move, announced their new entry into the home market, the IBM Wombat II GeeWhiz. According to sources within the company, the new computer was designed by top flight NASA engineers on their coffee breaks during launches. The specs on this machine are:

1750 Compatibility
MonkScribe Very Letter Quality printer (4 char/min)
Souped up 9600th Baud Tin Can Modem
(Campbell Compatible pending FDA Approval)
Speak and Tell voice synthesis
1K Hard Drive with paper tape back-up
Dual Disk Drives and Toaster Unit
(butters both sides at once)

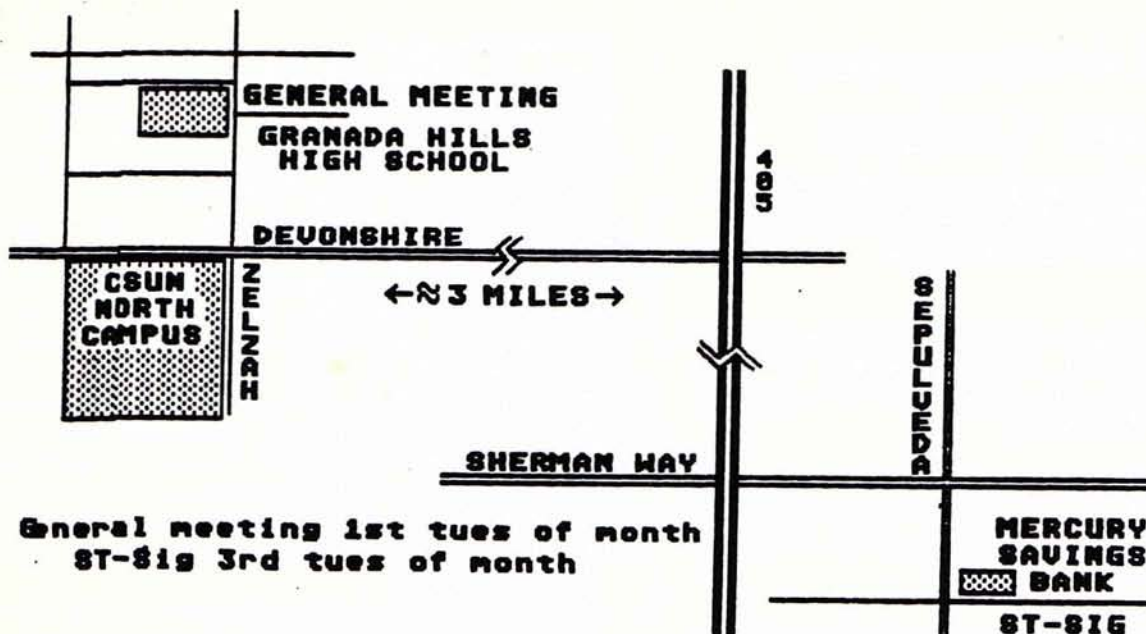Bundled software includes:

Wom-Word
Wom-Calc
Wom-Write
Wom-Mon (machine language monitor)

Atari president Jack Tramiel upon hearing of the new product announcements was heard saying, "Its too bad neither company can compete and deliver on time like Atari Corp."

7. ATARI is suing Apple computers because the "look and feel" of the new color MacIntosh is too much like the ATARI ST.

GENERAL MEETING
GRANADA HILLS
HIGH SCHOOL

DEVONSHIRE

CSUN
NORTH
CAMPUS

ZELZAH

405

SEPULVEDA

←≈3 MILES→

SHERMAN WAY

General meeting 1st tues of month
ST-Sig 3rd tues of month

MERCURY
SAVINGS
BANK

ST-SIG

LA- ACE
P.O. Box 7752
Van Nuys, CA
91409

SLCC NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE
P.O. BOX 1506
SAN LEANDRO, CA 94577